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**Testimony in favor of SB 152; An Act Concerning The Establishment Of The Connecticut Umbilical Cord Blood Collection Board.**

Dear Chairmen and ranking members of the Public Health Committee,

We would like to take this time to whole heartedly express our support of CT Committee Bill No.152 – regarding the establishment of the Connecticut Umbilical Cord Blood Collection Board.

How we became involved with this is an unfortunate and all too common story. Even though our specific story is unique to us, the common threads experienced by others in similar situations from diagnosis, to treatment, to remission and final outcome is an experience that no one should ever have to endure.

A brief summary of our story is that our first born daughter, Kacey Rose, was diagnosed with AML-M7 at 16 ½ months old. The only reason we became aware that donating umbilical cord blood was an option, was because Kacey needed a transplant but did not have an eligible match in the entire national bone marrow registry. As an alternative, her doctors searched for stem cells stored in public cord blood banks. Receiving a stem cell transplant was the only option to cure Kacey's rare form of pediatric cancer.

We were fortunate that a useable match had been found in the public cord blood bank which had been donated 7 years earlier. My daughter received her transplant, using the cells wisely donated by someone who was informed that this option was available to them.

The stem cells painlessly collected from the umbilical cord shortly after birth offer a viable alternative to anyone requiring a Bone Marrow transplant who is unable to find a suitable match or donor.

There are well over 10 million people registered as bone marrow donors but well under 100,000 publicly available cord blood units.

It is only common sense to understand that the most popular resistance that any new proposed bill such as this one will be related to financing such an undertaking. To that I say consider this, there was indeed a point in history when the collection and storage of human blood was considered unnecessary, expensive and a logistical challenge. Could any of you just imagine if those involved in forming the initial plan to convince the public, the companies and governmental agencies of the need to collect and store human blood products were turned down? Where would we be today? How many lives would have ended abruptly because such a life saving material was not readily available? Very likely, those lives would have been someone you know of or you yourself. The same story holds true in the collection and usage of human organs.

Fortunately, when it comes to the collection and usage of human cord blood stem cells, we are not pioneering new territory regarding its acquisition and uses. The methods of collecting and storing have already been successfully achieved by others and the viability of such cells used in the treatment and even cure of some diseases have been proven over and over again. The challenge put upon us today

is to approve this proposed bill so that the residents of the state of Connecticut can take the steps forward and begin to add to the precious small pool of publically available cord blood units stored worldwide.

Who knows....you or someone you love may one day be faced with one of the ailments that require a stem cell transplant as we were. Imagine the relief of hearing "there is no match for a bone marrow donor but we have found 1 or 2 terrific cord blood unit matches in the public cord blood bank available for you to use" just as we did.

Our hope is that the long term end result of passing this important bill is to provide the raw materials to make available not only a treatment option for those with various illnesses but an actual cure.

We implore all of you to embrace this unique humanitarian opportunity to become 'part of the solution' in saving lives in the near future and for generations to come.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

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